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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

OFFICE FOR FOOD AND FEED CONSERVATION

WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

FOOD CONSERVATION FOR HOMEMAKERS



It costs almost half again as much to feed a family today as it did two years ago. The family that spent \$15 a week on food two years ago would now spend \$21--if it had the same kind of meals. That means around \$300 a year more--food expenditures of \$1,092 instead of \$780--and many families find it hard to make the added outlays. In fact, the great majority of the Country's homemakers--about four out of five, according to a survey in Richmond, Virginia--are worrying about their food bills.

To help homemakers get the most for their food money, the Department of Agriculture suggests a 5-point consumer food conservation program. And to help homemakers carry out the program, the Department offers a menu and recipe booklet, "Money-Saving Main Dishes," free to anyone who requests it. All a woman needs to do is to print her name and address on a penny post card and address it to Food Conservation, Washington 25, D. C.

Many homemakers--about seven out of ten, if Richmond is typical--have cut down their purchases of some foods, generally of meat. For meat costs about eighty percent more than two years ago.

But even though they cut food bills by reducing purchases of some foods, many women still are troubled. They want to feed their families well nutritionally, for they know that food is important for health. So they wonder whether the foods that replace those they omit really give their families the nutrients they need. Few homemakers--as small a proportion as four percent, according to the Richmond study--have an adequate knowledge of nutrition; half have little knowledge or none. As a consequence, 40 to 50 percent of the Richmond women who reduced food purchases made substitutions that were inadequate nutritionally.

The 5-point consumer program and the booklet which helps implement it are designed to help women make nutritionally safe adjustments to today's food-supply and price situation. But they do more than help women solve their own family food problems--important though these are; they also help women do their part in the national conservation program.

We are a surplus-food country in a world that has a food deficit. We can help feed the hungry people of Europe and safeguard their democratic governments, and at the same time protect nutrition levels in this country--if we manage our food resources carefully. Wise management means, too, building up our food reserves for emergencies and combating inflated food prices.

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Women want to do their share in this national program for they are humanitarian and practical. They want to save food for the hungry but they know that food conservation helps their own families too. For only by concerted efforts of millions of consumers can our country effectively safeguard our own dietary levels, build up food reserves, and combat inflation.

The 5-point consumer program offered by the Department and outlined below points out day-to-day ways of meeting the problem of food scarcities and inflated prices:

1. Feed your family well, nutritionally. But don't think you have to follow the same meal patterns you followed before. Try new foods when they are plentiful. And try new recipes.

Plan your meals according to the basic seven food groups...as an aid to safeguarding nutrition. (The basic seven are listed in "Money-Saving Main Dishes.") You wouldn't expect to make a dress that would fit you without a pattern. . .so don't expect to serve meals to fit your family's nutritional needs without a planned menu -- a day's food pattern.

Make a food budget. Decide how much money you can spend for food...how much you must spend to feed your family adequately...and then plan how you will spend it. Base this spending plan on the basic seven.

"Money-Saving Main Dishes" will help you to find new meal patterns... and new recipes. And since all the menus and recipes are economical, the booklet will help you plan a budget your food funds will cover.

2. Use plentiful foods instead of scarce ones. You save money this way because plentiful foods are usually lower priced. And you help save scarce grain for feeding Europe.

And you'll help fight food inflation, too. For when you buy plentiful foods you lessen the pressure of consumer demand upon scarce ones...and that helps to bring down high food prices.

Supplies of fruits and vegetables promise to be plentiful this summer. It's economical to use them freely in season. Help make sure that what's produced is eaten--later if not now--by canning, freezing, or other preserving methods.

"Money-Saving Main Dishes" will help you with recipes and menus that call for plentiful foods...many of them are good old stand-bys...but the recipes tell you how to dress up these familiar friends so that the family will welcome them all over again.

3. Use food alternates wisely. If you cut down your purchases of some foods, be sure you use equally nutritious replacements. There are good alternates for high priced foods--with just as much food value. There's help for you, too, if your nutrition information about alternates is a bit rusty. A constant flow of information stems from Federal and State Governments, newspapers and radio stations, grocers and food industries.

Use meat alternates at least one day a week, whether you eat at home or in a restaurant. Meat supplies are smaller than a year ago and meat prices are about double what they were two years ago. So by using alternates you help stretch our shrinking meat supplies...and you save money.

Fish, eggs, milk, cheese, poultry, peanuts, and dried beans and peas can safely replace part of the meat in our diets. Many of these alternates cost less than meat, especially when they're in season as are eggs and cottage cheese in the spring.

Let economy cuts alternate for the more popular, more expensive cuts. The per-pound price of meat doesn't indicate its nutritive value. A pound of breast of lamb gives you about as much body-building protein as a pound of rib lamb chops that cost four times as much.

"Money-Saving Main Dishes" will help you use food alternates wisely. There's a section of the booklet devoted to each of the major meat alternates--main-dish recipes featuring cheese, eggs, fish, poultry--so you'll not have to wonder what to have for dinner on those meatless days. Most of the recipes for meat dishes call for economy cuts--cuts you may never have tried before.

And you needn't worry about the nutritive value of the main dishes using alternates and economical meat cuts. Each main dish provides about one-sixth of the protein you need for a day--the amount nutritionists recommend.

4. Serve dishes that extend scarce foods and save money. All of us like the kinds of foods and meals we're used to eating. But most of us have had to reduce customary purchases of some foods. Let extender dishes help you make such reductions without changing family food patterns.

Use meat-extender dishes to extend the flavor of meat so your family will not miss larger servings. Plentiful vegetables, for instance, "extend" the flavor of a relatively small amount of beef in a savory brown stew.

Use extender desserts, too, such as a delicious fruit shortcake in which the flavor of relatively expensive fruits is extended by the less expensive sweetened biscuits.

"Money-Saving Main Dishes" will give you recipes for many meat-extender dishes--an economy-cut pork roast, extended with flavorsome stuffing, economical stewing hen extended in chicken chop suey. Inexpensive, extender desserts are suggested, too, in the menus.

5. Get your money's worth from the food you buy. You rob yourself and your family when food goes into the garbage can. So watch the size of table servings. Make servings small and let the family come back for more...to avoid plate waste.

And store food the way it keeps best. Breakfast cereals and crackers, for example, need tightly covered containers. Guard against insects, which destroy food in the best regulated kitchens.

Save fats because our national supply still is low. Use all the saving ways you learned in wartime.

Use "left-overs" to add flavor and variety to other meals. Don't let them accumulate in the refrigerator..to be thrown away on clean-up day.

"Money-Saving Main Dishes" will help you use those "hold-overs" in dishes that make the repeat performance of a food better than its first appearance. Such recipes as rice with chicken...Chicken Risotto, as the Italians call it...will be so popular with your family that they'll hope for "hold-overs."

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"Money-Saving Main Dishes," the recipe and menu booklet, shows homemakers practical ways of carrying out the 5-point program as we have pointed out above. Menus, recipes and suggested variations will help them feed their families meals that are economical, appetizing, and nutritionally safe. Each of the main-dish recipes, for example, provides one-sixth or more of the family's daily protein needs--as much as a main-dish should provide. So homemakers can use the economy cuts, the meat alternates, and the meat-extender dishes without the uncertainty that troubled the women of Richmond--uncertainty as to the nutritional adequacy of their adjustments to high prices. And they can reduce their food bills, perhaps by as much as one-third in meat alone.

The main-dish recipes use such traditionally American food products as meat, poultry, cooked and canned meats and poultry, fish, eggs, cheese, dry beans and peas, bread and other cereal foods, and potatoes. They do not suggest radical changes in our food habits. Menus help to answer that perplexing question which arises daily: "What shall we have for dinner?" And they also show ways of using foods from the basic-7 food groups in meals that are nutritious and that use plentiful, economical foods. Even the question "What shall I put into the lunch-box?" is answered.

